

Congressional Republicans are still struggling to come to an agreement with President Obama and Senate Democrats over our nation's budget. If a deal is not reached by Friday, April 8, the federal government will officially shut down until a spending agreement for the rest of Fiscal Year 2011 is reached by Congress.

What does this mean for you?

Right now, there are no definitive answers, but Congresswoman McCollum wants to make sure Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District citizens have a general idea of what to expect if the federal government shuts down. Congresswoman McCollum and her staff will do their best to answer your questions and concerns if there is a government shutdown.

Why would the government shut down?

Every Fiscal Year, Congress must pass a budget, and the President must sign it into law. In this case, the House passed budgets for Fiscal Year 2011, but the Senate did not approve them.

Although the Fiscal Year 2011 began last October, no budget had passed. Therefore Congress and President Obama had to approve short-term continuing resolutions, which are budgets to keep the government running.

The latest continuing resolution expires Friday, April 8. If Congress and President Obama do not approve of a budget for Fiscal Year 2011 or another continuing resolution, the government will shut down by law.

Will all federal government services stop if there is a shutdown?

No. Critical government services that protect property and safeguard human life – such as

police departments, fire departments, Transportation Security Administration, air traffic controllers, the postal service, etc. – will remain open. Museums and parks that are run by the federal government will not be open.

Will Members of Congress and the President still get paid?

Yes, however Congresswoman McCollum has consistently supported legislation that would stop Members of Congress from getting paid during a government shutdown.

Will Congresswoman McCollum's office be open?

Yes, Congresswoman McCollum's Washington, DC and St. Paul offices will be open. Her staff, who will not be paid during a shutdown, will continue to do everything they can to address problems constituents encounter with a federal agency, answer questions about legislative matters, and deal to the best of our ability with any emergencies.

Are federal and state income taxes still due by April 18?

Yes, but people may have to wait longer for their refunds since the Internal Revenue Service will not be open.

Will military personnel get paid?

No. Members of the military will not receive paychecks even though they must continue their service. Civilians working at the Pentagon may be furloughed without pay until the shutdown ends.

Will I receive my Social Security and/or Medicare benefits?

Yes. Such government spending is deemed mandatory so it is automatically authorized every year. Social Security and Medicare benefits will be mailed, however some recipients may not be able to apply for new benefits or speak to an agency worker.

Will passport and visa applications be processed?

No. Passport and visa applications will resume once the government has resumed its business. Embassies will remain open for services for American citizens, but will not conduct visa interviews.

Would VA facilities stop services?

No. Medical employees who provide emergency care and inpatient are essential, but outpatient treatment may not be available.

Will my tour of the White House, Capitol Hill, Bureau of Engraving, Library of Congress, Supreme Court or other federal government sites be affected?

Yes. If there is a government shutdown, all tours will end and will only resume once the shutdown ends. We are very sorry about the inconvenience.

Can I reschedule my tour?

Yes, but we cannot reschedule until the government shutdown ends.

When will the shutdown end?

The government shutdown will end soon as Congress and President Obama can agree upon a spending package for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011. There is no indication of when that will definitively happen.

How much money will be saved because of the government shutdown?

None. The shutdown could cost the federal government billions. In 1996, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated that the first of two government shutdowns cost taxpayers an estimated \$100 million per day. The final price tag for that closing and the subsequent three-week shutdown was over \$1.25 billion.